

GEORGE CHANDLER

550753

September 8, 2001

Lake H. Barrett, Acting Director
Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management
Yucca Mountain Site Characterization Office
Department of Energy
POBox 30307
North Las Vegas NV 89036-0307

RECEIVED

SEP 20 2001

Dear Mr. or Ms. Barrett:

I reply to your letter of August 28 2001, in which you solicited comment on the possible recommendation by the Secretary on the development of Yucca Mountain as a repository for spent fuel and high level radioactive waste.

The opening of this repository is vital for the safety of the nation from the threat posed by the continuing long-term storage of nuclear waste in temporary holding facilities scattered all over the country. It also is vital to the development of a new generation of nuclear reactors that will begin to shift the burden of electric power generation from dwindling coal and oil supplies with the attendant air pollution to our abundant and clean supplies of uranium.

I have observed the studies at Yucca Mountain from a couple of perspectives for at least fifteen years. I was a scientist at the Nevada Test Site during the days of underground nuclear testing when they began the first exploration of the mountain. I was also a member and Chair of the Northern New Mexico Citizen's Advisory Board until I retired this year, and in that capacity I saw and heard many reports on the Yucca Mountain Repository and on the transportation of waste to it.

From your series of reports and from discussion with some colleagues at the Los Alamos National Lab who were involved with the studies it is clear to me that the repository and the transportation of waste to the repository are safe from all but the most extreme, low-probability scenarios imaginable. These scenarios are raised as part of the last ditch efforts of those who oppose all nuclear technology on principal alone, those to whom every nuclear technology is going to lead to armageddon. These are emotional, irrational arguments with no basis in fact. To their eternal credit, the DOE and the Government have patiently respected their right to feel this way, and have tried to allay their honest fears with ever more detailed studies, and also they have added new layers of protection for the waste, all at the cost of billions of dollars. All reasonable and many unreasonable objections have been covered, it is now time to move on to the actual development of the repository.

Go for it.

Sincerely,



George Chandler